

IN THE CLAIMS

*The status of the claims as presently amended is as follows:*

1-18. (*Cancelled*)

19. (*Currently Amended*) A valve for enabling release of pressurized steam from a steam pressure vessel, the valve comprising:

an input flow flange, a discharge flow flange and a displaceable closure member, which seals the discharge flow flange to prevent ~~the a~~ release of steam from the steam pressure vessel in its closed disposition; and ~~is primarily~~

wherein the displaceable closure member is response to steam pressure and is maintained in said closed disposition when the steam pressure vessel is in a charged condition, such that pressure of steam within the steam pressure vessel is active to hold the displaceable closure member in said closed disposition; by exposure to the pressure of the steam within the steam pressure vessel, and

wherein the closure member being is displaceable from said closed disposition to an open disposition against the pressure of the steam within the steam pressure vessel for said release of pressurized steam from the steam pressure vessel by a double-acting actuator including a drive piston and a spindle that is connected to the drive piston and to the closure member; and

wherein the spindle is connected to and extends from a side of the closure member to which the pressure of the steam is applied and is arranged coaxially with the discharge flow flange .

20. (*Cancelled*)

21. (*Cancelled*)

22. (*Currently Amended*) A valve according to Claim ~~[[21]]~~ 19, wherein said double-acting actuator comprises an air-driven piston/cylinder device.

23. (*Cancelled*)

24. (*Previously Presented*) A valve according to Claim 19, wherein the closure member is mounted for substantially metal-to-metal contact with a valve seat portion, without interposition of any sealing element.

25. (*Previously Presented*) A valve according to Claim 19, wherein the closure member has a face portion which is interchangeably secured to the remainder of the closure member.

26. (*Previously Presented*) A valve according to Claim 19, comprising a seat portion for engagement by a face portion of the closure member, the seat portion being interchangeably secured to a valve body portion in the seat region.

27. (*Currently Amended*) A valve according to Claim 19, wherein the closure member is mounted for substantially vertical displacement between said closed disposition and ~~[[an]]~~ said open disposition thereof.

28. (*Currently Amended*) A valve according to Claim 19, wherein the nominal flange size of the discharge flow flange valve body at the steam exit side is substantially greater than the nominal flange size of the input flow flange valve body at the steam entry side.

29. (*Currently Amended*) A product treatment system comprising:

a valve for enabling release of pressurized steam from a steam pressure vessel, the valve comprising an input flow flange, a discharge flow flange and a displaceable closure member, which seals the discharge flow flange to prevent ~~the~~ a release of steam from the steam pressure vessel in its closed disposition; ~~and is primarily~~

wherein the displaceable closure member is responsive to steam pressure and is maintained in said closed disposition when the steam pressure vessel is in a charged condition, such that pressure of steam within the steam pressure vessel is active to hold the displaceable closure member in said closed disposition; by exposure to the pressure of the steam within the steam pressure vessel, and

wherein the closure member being is displaceable from said closed disposition to an open disposition against the pressure of the steam within the steam pressure vessel for said release of pressurized steam from the steam pressure vessel[[,]] by a double-acting actuator

including a drive piston and a spindle that is connected to the drive piston and to the closure member;

wherein the spindle is connected to and extends from a side of the closure member to which the pressure of the steam is applied and is arranged coaxially with the discharge flow flange; and

wherein the valve is mounted for release of pressurized steam into an expansion region substantially at the point of entry of steam into said expansion region.

30. (*Withdrawn*) A product treatment system comprising a pressure vessel, an expansion region for receiving pressurised steam discharged from the pressure vessel at the end of a steam treatment phase of said product treatment, and a solids trap, said solids trap being in communication with the expansion region to receive steam at a substantially reduced pressure as compared with the steam pressure on initial entry into the expansion region, along with any entrained solid matter.

31. (*Withdrawn*) A product treatment system according to Claim 30, wherein a baffle is located in said expansion region between a steam entry point and a discharge duct.

32. (*Withdrawn*) A product treatment system comprising a pressure vessel, an expansion region for receiving pressurised steam discharged from the pressure vessel at the end of a steam treatment phase of said product treatment, and a solids trap, said solids trap being in communication with the expansion region to receive steam at a substantially reduced pressure as compared with the steam pressure on initial entry into the expansion region, along with any entrained solid matter, the system further comprising a valve for enabling release of pressurised steam from a pressure vessel into said expansion region, the valve comprising a displaceable closure member which, in its closed disposition, is maintained in said closed disposition by exposure to the pressure of the steam within the pressure vessel, and the closure member being displaceable from said closed disposition to an open disposition against the pressure of the steam within the pressure vessel for said release of pressurized steam from the pressure vessel.

33. (*Withdrawn*) A product treatment system according to Claim 32, wherein said solids trap acts in a cyclonic manner.

34. (*Withdrawn*) A product treatment system according to Claim 32, comprising an exhaust stack communicating between said solids trap and atmosphere, said stack including noise reduction means.

35. (*Withdrawn*) A product treatment system according to Claim 34, wherein said noise reduction means is defined by a stack region of enlarged cross-section transverse to the direction of exhaust flow, said enlarged cross-sectional region comprising a plurality of spaced-apart perforated plates each disposed transversely to said direction of exhaust flow.

36. (*Withdrawn*) A product treatment system according to Claim 35, wherein said pressure vessel is rotatable.

37. (*Withdrawn*) A product treatment system according to Claim 32, wherein said product treatment comprises steam peeling.

38. (*Currently Amended*) A product treatment system comprising:

a valve for enabling release of pressurized steam from a steam pressure vessel, the valve comprising an input flow flange, a discharge flow flange and a displaceable closure member, which seals the discharge flow flange to prevent ~~the a~~ release of steam from the steam pressure vessel in its closed disposition; and ~~is primarily~~

wherein the displaceable closure member is responsive to steam pressure and is maintained in said closed disposition when the steam pressure vessel is in a charged condition, such that pressure of steam within the steam pressure vessel is active to hold the displaceable closure member in said closed disposition; by exposure to the pressure of the steam within the steam pressure vessel, and

wherein the closure member being is displaceable from said closed disposition to an open disposition against the pressure of the steam within the steam pressure vessel for said release of pressurized steam from the steam pressure vessel[.], by a double-acting actuator including a drive piston and a spindle that is connected to the drive piston and to the closure member; and

wherein the spindle is connected to and extends from a side of the closure member to which the pressure of the steam is applied and is arranged coaxially with the discharge flow flange; and

wherein the nominal flange size of the discharge flow flange ~~valve body at the steam exit side~~ is substantially greater than the nominal flange size of the input flow flange valve body at the steam entry side.